

Recycling and Refuse Management Committee
Minutes from 4/2/09 meeting

Present: Meg Vickery, Chair; Susan Waite, DPW Liaison; Sterling Bush; Marianne Lorenzelli; Lucy McMurrer.

No Quorum
Unofficial Meeting Notes

Membership

John Root is now an official committee member.

Health Regulations

No new news to report, Susan said. She did mention that Amherst's water consumption is now being broken down into more detailed categories and, as a result, Amherst's residential water consumption looks much better (gone from approx. 100 gals./household to 50 gals./household).

Transfer Station Update

Susan spoke to Guilford about the Book Shed roof, she and Sterling will meet separately to discuss this.

School Composting

Letter to Mike Morris was signed by members present. Lucy will bring the letter to Greg and Marianne to get signed and return it to Susan ASAP. April break may be when the compost bin(s) at Crocker Farm will be built. There's a soil criteria component in the 5th grade MCAs and perhaps onsite composting could be helpful regarding that? We want to try to get this integrated into the curriculum! John Root had sustainability ideas. Should we send Mike Morris another letter saying it's exciting, a model for other schools, and we'd like to meet with him/the Crocker Farm faculty to help make this sustainable?

Downtown Recycling

Susan's looking at various recycling trailers to purchase with our grant money. Emptying downtown bins into toters is a concern, as is the long-term viability of this project.. This will be discussed at next month's meeting when we have a quorum.

Trash Free Lunch Day

Friday April 17 is Trash Free Lunch day at all Amherst elementary schools and, perhaps, Pelham elementary school. We need volunteers at the schools during lunch periods to essentially be cheerleaders. Could Greg or Sylvia Keochakian do it for Crocker Farm? To increase awareness, decrease waste, and as a fundraiser, Wrap-n-Mats will be sold. Handouts are going out to all participating schools. Plastic trays are being used at the schools whenever possible but when there aren't enough, biodegradable paper trays are used. Plastic trays are disappearing at the high school at an alarming rate so more paper trays are being used. This is expensive, discouraging, and may jeopardize the use of re-useable trays. Writing Whitsons a letter to thank them for using cardboard compostable trays might be a good idea right now. Lucy will do this.

Earth Day

The Committee and David Loveler (aka "Dr. Worm") will participate in a booth on the North end of the Town Common with the Public Shade Tree Committee on the 25th for Arbor Day. David will bring worm boxes, etc. We'll have composters for sale, Wrap-n-Mat sandwich wraps, gift certificates, and recycling info. The Amherst Chamber of Commerce (ACC) has an environmental committee -- perhaps they'd like to participate? The scavenger hunt will be supported by the ACC. Tony Maroulis will help in publicizing this. Lucy will help Susan visit

participating downtown businesses. We need to do shifts from 9-1 Saturday. Sterling will bring sandwich boards from the Jones Library.

Recycling Coordinator's Report Highlights

Susan's lobbying netted results! The 2009 Reduce Reuse Recycle Earth Day insert will be included in The Amherst Bulletin (as well as the Gazette) this year. This publication is organized by the Springfield Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) Advisory Board. John made some great suggestions for articles which were passed along to the organizers.

Spring Rain Barrel Sale: Funding for DEP's rain barrel discount has been withdrawn for 2009, but DEP will still sell the New England Rain Barrel for the bulk price of \$72.95 (retail price is \$119.95). People may purchase barrels directly from New England Rain Barrel. Pick-up day is Sunday, April 26 at the DPW.

Pelham Elementary School held a fundraising lasagna dinner in March where they purchased special biodegradable plates, cups and utensils and I located a composting facility that would accept it all (many composters dislike corn and potato-based plastic replacement products because they take too long to biodegrade). At this point, compost professionals recommend using unbleached paper plates & cups and reusable/washable utensils for "green" events. This avoids additional expense and confusion about which disposable utensils are compostable and which are not.

The Taste of Amherst is scheduled for June 18-21. Committee volunteers played an important role helping out with recycling last year. Susan will be attending Taste meetings this spring and hopes to have a similar presence at this year's event.

Next committee meeting scheduled for *the first Thursday of May, the 7th* at 4:30.

Meeting adjourned 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lucy McMurrer